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**Environment Department Issues a "Drinking Water Advisory"
for Independent Utility Water System**

(Santa Fe, NM) –The New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) Drinking Water Bureau has advised the Independent Utility Water System to issue a "Drinking Water Advisory" for its consumers.

The Independent Utility Water System serves approximately 1,260 consumers in the Sandia Knolls area in Bernalillo County. The water system exceeded the action level for lead in four of twenty samples collected 22-29 June 2004. Lead was not detected in the other sixteen samples. NMED requires that the system notify all customers served by that system of this finding.

Consumers of the Independent Utility Water System are advised not to give the water to infants or pregnant consumers. Infants who drink water that contains lead in excess of the action level could experience delays in their physical or mental development. Children could show slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities. Adults who drink this water over many years could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure.

Consumers are advised to let the cold water tap run for about 15-30 seconds before using it for drinking or cooking any time the water in a faucet has gone unused for more than six hours. The longer water resides in plumbing the more lead it may contain. Use only cold water for cooking and drinking. Hot water can dissolve more lead more quickly than cold water. These actions will reduce the lead concentrations in your drinking water. However, if you are still concerned, you may wish to use bottled water for drinking and cooking.

Lead seldom occurs naturally in water supplies. Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of the corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and household plumbing. These materials can include lead-based solder, brass and chrome-plated brass faucets, and in some cases, pipes made of lead that connect houses and buildings to water mains.

The New Mexico Department of Health has also been notified and will remain on alert for any health effects linked to this water quality issue. Consumers of the water system may call (505) 476-3028 if they have any water-related health concerns.

For more information contact Angela Faye Cross, Civil Engineer, NMED at (505) 222-9529 or Adam Rankin, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.